



Winchester Youth Service Bureau

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My name is Mary Coutant. I am the Director of the Winchester Youth Service Bureau in Winsted CT. We serve children and families from six (6) communities. We operate with one full time therapeutic recreation therapist, a 19 hr per wk Clinical Director, and a 19 hr Executive Director. Even with those meager numbers of staff, we manage to serve over 350 families per yr.

As is the case with all Youth Service Bureaus, we are the first line of defense for DCF, families, schools, courts, and therapeutic agencies.

We get kids referred to us for counseling, after school programs, summer camp, a Juvenile Review Board and a myriad of other services. We treat children, and families in a counseling setting, we work with them in a therapeutic play group, we provide support for parents, serve as court advocates and more.

Perhaps one of the most critical services we provide is case management. We "walk families through the system", a daunting task, at best.

All of the research shows that community based programming experiences the greatest degree of success. Couple that information with the suggested cuts, and you have chaos. A STATE IN CRISIS, to say the least!

Were we to have to manage a 25% cut, it would be devastating. As with my fellow YSB's, we work with minimal dollars and experience maximum success. Cut us and you have completely "pulled the rug out" from under DCF workers and other who rely on community based services.

I, along with my staff and board implore you to reconsider this penny wise, pound foolish approach. The least among us, Connecticut's Children, are in peril, should these cuts take effect.

We Build Strong Kids, Strong Families, Strong Communities